

VZCZCXRO8960
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #2207/01 1461034
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 261034Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1169
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
INFO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 1264
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUEHXS/ASEAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2654
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5740
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9325
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 4326
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2288
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 0803
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3322

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 002207

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR UNDER SECRETARY PDOBRIANSKY
STATE FOR OES/IHA FOR JKAUFMANN, DSINGER AND RDALEY
STATE FOR INR/EAP FOR JSTROTZ
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/ICD FOR ROSENBLUM
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/DL&P FOR MAGINNIS
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/ITP/AA FOR ALEXANDER
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/FAA FOR HAGER
STATE PASS USDA/APHIS/IS FOR HOFFMAN
STATE PASS USDA/APHIS/VS FOR DUVERNOY
STATE PASS USDA/ARS/SEPRL FOR SUAREZ
STATE PASS USAID FOR DCARROLL AND ACLEMENTS
BANGKOK FOR REO JAMES WALLER
CIA FOR NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL NIO/EA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REGIONAL OFFICE IN MANILA
DISCUSSES RECENT INDONESIAN DEATHS

REF: A) JAKARTA 6495 B) MANILA 1567 C) MANILA 860
 D) STATE 023826 E) 05 STATE 209622

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SUMMARY

[¶1.](#) World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office in Manila outlined to Econoffs recent developments in North Sumatra, Indonesia involving a large cluster of avian influenza deaths. WHO confirmed that a group of seven family members contracted the disease; six have died. WHO was unable to determine the source of the outbreak and could not rule out human-to-human transmission. Virus samples taken from the victims showed no signs of mutation, and WHO confirmed that the samples were H5N1 avian flu, according to the WHO Manila office. End summary.

WHO OFFICIAL DISCUSSES INDONESIA'S AI CLUSTER

[¶2.](#) Dr. Peter Cordingley at the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office in Manila provided background to Econoffs on May 24 on the recent cluster of avian influenza (AI) deaths in Indonesia's Northern Sumatra region reported by Reuters and sourced to WHO Manila. A "cluster" is defined as a group of infected people living close together

and contracting the virus within a narrow timeframe. Cordingley said that the WHO has suspected human-to-human transmission in several instances in Thailand and Vietnam involving small clusters of two or three people. The recent outbreak in Indonesia, with seven or eight persons infected, represents the largest known cluster of human avian influenza cases to date. This individual may have been exposed to infected birds. Cordingley said it is likely that seven of the victim's family members contracted AI from a human source as there is no evidence that this group encountered infected animals or contaminated droppings. The suspected initial human source in this case was the first family member to die, and that person was buried prior to any suspicion of AI and without medical examination. Cordingley said that WHO doctors working in Indonesia and Hong Kong confirmed that the Sumatra deaths are attributable to the H5N1 strain, with blood samples tested locally and in Hong Kong.

NO MUTATION IN AI VIRUS

13. Cordingley said that recent news reports were not fully accurate and underplayed some "good news." Virus samples from the Indonesian cluster showed no signs of mutating into a new virus strain that could easily transfer between humans. Cordingley was careful to note that this H5N1 transmission was not necessarily human-to-human. He said that WHO was certain that this incident did not reflect the presence of a pandemic strain. However, he could not rule out human-to-human transmission of H5N1. He said that WHO Geneva remains intensely interested in understanding this cluster and has dispatched a team to Sumatra to investigate.

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CONTINUED COORDINATION

14. A representative from Health and Human Services - Center for Disease Control will be coming to Manila May 28-31 2006 to meet with staff from WHO/Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) to discuss the renewal of the WPRO cooperative agreement and avian influenza activities in Southeast Asia.

KENNEY